U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Critical Electric Infrastructure Information (CEII) Workshop
February 14-15, 2018
Summary of Conclusions

Purpose

On February 14-15, 2018, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability (OE) and Office of Policy (OP) convened representatives from the energy industry, and local, state and federal government to discuss perspectives on Critical Electric Infrastructure Information (CEII) sharing frameworks and optimal information sharing protections and protocols. Federal, state and local government, and the electricity sector, have a common goal of improving the security and resilience of the nation's energy sector. Protection of these critical systems often requires an exchange of sensitive information between industry and government partners. CEII protections are intended to facilitate this information flow by providing industry with the assurance that its data are protected, while ensuring government has access to the information it needs to manage evolving threats to the energy sector.

Summary of Discussion

Through facilitated discussions, the CEII workshop focused on outlining perspectives and concerns related to existing CEII practices, and obtaining industry and government perspective on broader frameworks for sharing sensitive information. Workshop participants discussed options for identifying and safeguarding CEII, best practices and challenges among current information sharing programs and partnerships, additional safeguards which could increase voluntarily shared information, and how a DOE CEII program can supplement existing information protection and sharing partnerships between government and industry. Major information sharing challenges and potential opportunities for overcoming existing gaps were identified during the workshop, including:

- **Increasing access to information** – Public sector entities would benefit from a more streamlined approach to access the information they need, namely for emergency planning, as jurisdictions handle situations in different ways. Understanding what data currently exist, who owns it, and whether or not it can be shared are all crucial details.
- **Strengthening ownership over shared data** – Information owners expressed concerns over the ability to guarantee CEII will only be accessed by appropriate parties with a "need to know". Specific areas for improvement could include increasing industry participation in validating request for CEII, and ensuring those who are entrusted to receive CEII, even if covered by an NDA, do not disclose information to other stakeholders.
- **Advancing a common lexicon** – Ambiguity exists in information sharing discussions amongst and between government and industry. Processes could be improved through the development and promotion of a common lexicon across entities, including for CEII.
- **Promoting a culture of information security** – Education and training on information security concerns is needed to share best practices and better communicate the risks of disclosing sensitive information.

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Stakeholders also discussed benefits that could be provided by a DOE CEII program, such as:

- Facilitating dialogue among entities to help stakeholders clearly define the data elements that they each need for their respective missions, and outline what questions to ask of partner organizations to obtain those data.
- Identifying and sharing best practice guidance on choosing and verifying trusted partners;
- Streamlining activities within a non-regulatory, collaborative framework;
- Creating an information sharing framework that harmonizes information requests and creates a common lexicon to enable more effective energy assurance planning partnerships between government and industry, and enhances planning across state lines.